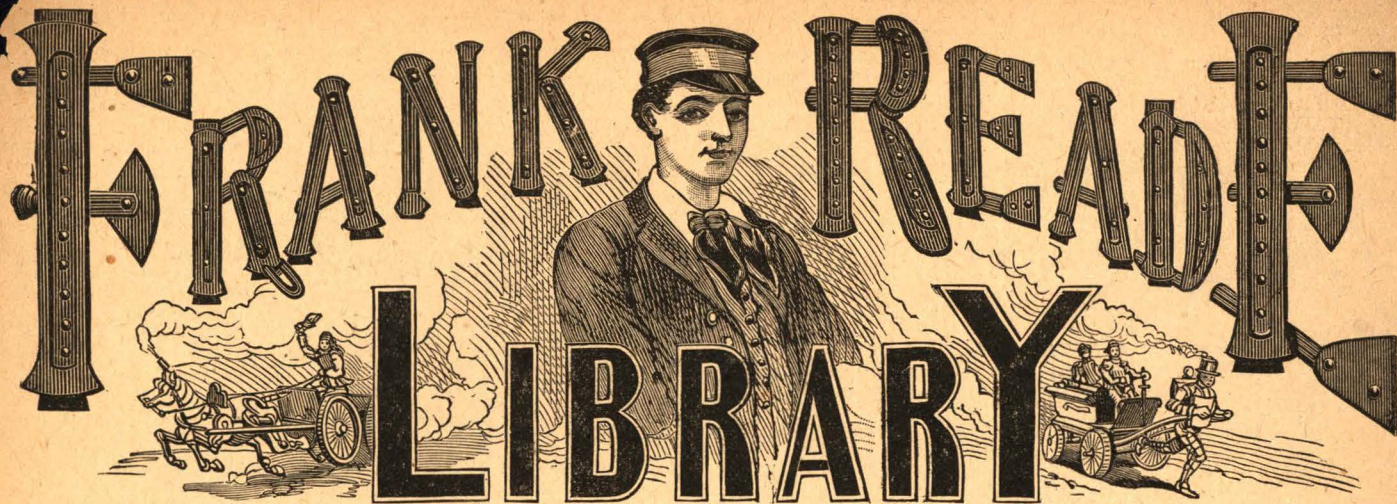


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**Frank Reade, Jr.,**

Exploring a Submarine Mountain; or,  
LOST AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

By "NONAME."





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# Frank Reade, Jr., Exploring a Submarine Mountain;

## OR,

## LOST AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

By "NONAME,"

Author of "Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Cruiser of the Lakes," "Frank Reade, Jr., and His Electric Prairie Schooner," "From Zone to Zone," "The Black Range," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE NEW SUBMARINE BOAT.

"HUM! You think Everest and Erebus and Popocatepetl and Mont Blanc and other peaks I might mention, high mountains, but I can tell you there is a mountain under the sea higher than them all."

Prof. Giles Mayhew adjusted his eyeglasses and glared over their rims at Frank Reade, Jr., the famous young inventor whose fame is world wide.

The two men at the moment were in the library of the Readestown Scientific Society of which Prof. Mayhew was president.

"Your remark is anomalous!" said Frank; "the highest mountain in the world under the sea?"

"That is what I said."

"How do you make that out?"

"Easy enough. It is simply higher than the mountains I have named!"

"But we are accustomed to measure our mountains from the level of the sea. According to that status your mountain is no mountain at all."

"Yes it is!" declared the professor, "but it is a submarine mountain. The distance from its summit to its base at the bottom of the sea is fully thirty-eight thousand feet in altitude!"

"How do you know that?"

"From deep sea, barometrical measurement."

Frank Reade, Jr., was at once interested.

"And where is this wonderful submarine mountain?" he asked.

"Can you tell me that?"

"Why certainly," replied Prof. Mayhew. "It is in the great Pacific Valley, extending from the Aleutian Isles on the north to the Sandwich Islands southwest."

"You mean the valley extends that distance?"

"Yes."

"Whereabouts in this valley do you reckon this submarine mountain is?"

"About three thousand miles from Honolulu, northeast. Ah, me! I wish that it was possible to explore that mountain, for it is believed to have once been above the sea and part of a large continent."

"And perhaps inhabited by man."

"Certainly. It is not at all unreasonable. But alas! we have as yet not solved the subject of submarine navigation."

"Yes, we have."

"What!"

The professor turned an astonished glance upon Frank.

The young inventor smiled and replied:

"The problem is solved."

"What do you mean?"

"Just what I say. The problem of submarine navigation is solved."

The professor looked as if he believed Frank crazy.

"Who has solved it?"

"I have."

"You?"

"Yes!"

Prof. Mayhew pulled his white beard a moment and there was a slight quiver about his mouth.

"Don't joke with me, Frank," he said, "it is a serious matter."

"I am not joking," said Frank, earnestly. "I mean every word I say. I have invented a boat which will travel under the sea!"

"I know you are a wonderful fellow, but that seems like an improbable yarn."

"I will prove it to you."

"How?"

"I will show you the boat!"

"Show it to me?" gasped the professor.

"Yes, it is all completed in my shop at present. I have been long at work upon the problem!"

This was too much for the professor. He gave a gasp and sank into a chair. Frank actually had to fan him to revive him.

"Am I dreaming?" muttered the professor, as he recovered himself. "No. I believe I am in my right mind. Frank, I want to see that new invention."

"And you shall. Just come with me?"

The professor left the library of the Scientific Society with Frank. A moment later they were in the street.

Readestown was a little gem of a city. It had been founded by the Reade ancestors, and it bore their name.

Frank's father before him had been an inventor. The younger Reade had perfected such wonders as the Electric Horse, the Air ship and various styles of electric machines to travel on the surface of the earth.

It was true that he had invented a submarine boat.

His most faithful co-workers and assistants, as well as his traveling companions, were two men, one a negro, and the other an Irishman.

Barney O'Shea and Pomp were almost as famous as their young master.

They had traveled in many lands, were always ready for business or fun, and indeed Frank Reade, Jr., could ill have spared them.

The Reade shops were large buildings of brick situated upon the banks of a deep and wide canal connected with a navigable river which flowed down to the sea.

Frank had caused a large tank or basin to be constructed, in which he intended to try his submarine boat.

With the professor by his side the shops were soon reached.

At the gate they were met by a short, diminutive and comical looking negro.

"Hello, Pomp!" cried Frank, cheerily. "Is Barney hereabouts?"

"I done fink he am, sah. Leastwise, he was a moment ago jest tryin' fo' to stick pins in dis chile on de sly."

Barney and Pomp were practical jokers and constantly hectoring each other.

The words had barely left Pomp's lips when a stentorian voice came from behind a pile of iron pipe near.

"Shure, Misther Frank, it's here I am. An' if yez will mek that naygur throw away the brick he's thryin' ter murder me wid, I'll be wid yez."

"Pins and bricks, eh?" exclaimed Frank, smiling at the professor.

"Up to your old tricks! Well, lay aside your joking now; I have a serious matter on hand."

Pomp dropped the brick which he had been holding behind him, and Barney, reassured, came forth from his concealment.

"Barney," said Frank, peremptorily, "I want your services."

"All right, sor."

The Celt made a comical bow.

"I wish to show this gentleman the Electric Tortoise. Come with us."

Barney followed Frank and the professor across the yard.

But at the other end he turned and made defiant grimaces at Pomp.

The three men now passed into a high-arched building. Upon every hand were large patterns and parts of models for iron working.

Beyond this building they emerged into a sort of wide area, the center of which was a huge basin.

This was connected with the canal by a lock gate.

Moored close by the bank of this basin was the submarine boat.

The professor gazed at it with deep interest. He saw at once that it was a craft constructed after an unusual pattern.

As it lay there at its moorings, he saw that its shape was something like that of a fast yacht of the most approved type.

But though the lines were there, the breadth of beam and depth of keel were greater.

This, of course, was necessary for steadiness. Above the rail, however, the character of the boat was entirely different.

A cabin of thin but tough steel extended from the bow almost to the stern.

In this were plate glass windows protected by screens. Amidships there was an arched opening, passing from one rail to the other, and a slight deck built out and guarded by a hand-rail.



Forward and above the cabin, was a pilot-house, cylindrical in form, with a dome roof.

The cabin itself was possessed of a dome roof, with dead-eye windows. In the center of the roof was a powerful electric search-light, operated from below.

Two masts, fore and aft, were intended to steady the boat, when traveling on the surface.

This is a meager account of the exterior of the submarine boat.

The interior was a revelation.

Frank led the way into the cabin. This was furnished like a palace. There were smoking rooms, a drawing room, small library, state-rooms and dining salon.

Then beyond was the gun room and the magazine. Below and forward was the engine room, where were the wonderful electric engines.

This interested the professor the most, and also the huge reservoir and air compressor which enabled the boat to rise or sink by the simple method of taking in water and then forcing it out of the reservoir with the compressed air.

The question of sustaining life under the water had been ingeniously provided for.

In various parts of the vessel were huge trumpet mouthed air valves. These connected with a chemical air chamber, where the air of the boat constantly passing over the chemicals was returned freed from impurities and as replete with good oxygen as was necessary.

Life could be sustained under water an indefinite period, or as long as the chemicals should last.

Professor Giles Mayhew examined every detail carefully.

Then he gripped Frank's hand and silently walked out on deck. Not until they were ashore did he speak.

Then he said:

"Frank, you have done it. You are the most remarkable man in the world to-day."

"That is putting it a little strong, Professor!" said Frank, with a smile.

"But I mean it. Your submarine boat is a wonder."

"You believe it?"

"Of course I do, but—"

"What?"

"Are you really in earnest when you say that you will really take me along with you in the exploration of that Submarine Mountain?"

"Why, of course I am!"

The professor turned away to hide a powerful wave of emotion which swept over him. He was an overjoyed man.

## CHAPTER II.

### UNDER THE SEA.

Of course the news got abroad that Frank Reade, Jr., had invented a submarine boat.

As a result the shops were besieged by an army of reporters and sightseers.

Cranks sent beseeching and threatening letters. One misguided individual offered a million dollars for the use of the boat in blowing up the British navy.

Some most ridiculous proposals were made.

But all these communications went into the waste basket.

Frank was not a fool. He had an extra guard established, and hurriedly made preparations for the start.

The government sent a representative to view the boat, and an offer was made for the secret, but Frank said:

"I do not approve of war or its horrible engines. I don't wish my invention to ever be turned to such a purpose. For that reason and the good of humanity at large I prefer to keep my secret."

"But think of its value," protested the agent.

"That may be. But money is no object to me at all. The government has enough to defend itself with now."

"You are not patriotic!"

"Just the same I am not lending myself to the invention of engines of destruction. If the secret of my boat was to be used by the government for the rescue of human life, or the betterment of human kind, I would present it to them."

And here the subject dropped. The agent went away discomfited.

The day for the start of the Tortoise came. It was not altogether a propitious day.

The skies were cloudy and overhung, and there were mutterings of a storm. But this did not affect the sailing of the submarine boat.

So at the appointed hour all was announced in readiness.

A mighty throng gathered upon the stone walled banks of the canal. At the right moment the gates of the reservoir were opened. The water came surging out and brought upon its flood the famous craft.

A mighty cheer went up from thousands of throats. Frank Reade, Jr., appeared for a moment on the deck waving the American flag. Then the Tortoise glided out into the canal.

For a few moments she was visible on the surface of the water in her trimness of outline.

Then suddenly a great cry went up from the crowd:

"Look! down she goes!"

This was true. With a mighty plunge the submarine boat went down beneath the waters of the canal.

It was as if she had sunk from sight forever.

Some moments elapsed.

Then another mighty yell went up. Some hundred yards down the stream there was seen a dark object rising from the liquid depths.

"She is coming up!"

Up into the light of day she shot, shaking the water duck-like from her back. The Tortoise was a success.

A short distance below she ran into the river.

The party were off for the Atlantic Ocean. The start was a success. The incidents of the voyage were to be thrilling indeed.

The voyage down the river was devoid of any thrilling incident. All the way to the ocean the Tortoise sailed upon the surface.

In due time the Atlantic was reached. Frank ran well out to sea and then set his course.

Straight through the Atlantic to Cape San Roque, South America, he drew the first line.

"The nearest and most direct way for us, and in fact the only feasible route is around Cape Horn. It will take a good while to make the trip, but on the way we shall meet with many wonderful scenes!"

"Right you are!" cried Prof. Giles. "We shall explore a good part of the waters of the world!"

Everybody was in high spirits.

When well off the coast Frank went into the pilot house and pressed a lever.

This shut and sealed hermetically every door and window of the boat. Then he opened the reservoir valve.

The air was automatically compressed into the various cylinders, and the water rushed into the reservoir. The boat instantly sank.

When a sufficient depth had been reached in his estimation Frank shut the valve.

This held the boat in suspension.

Frank now put the propeller in motion.

The Tortoise shot forward through the water.

The effect was indescribable.

Contrary to general opinion the deep sea is not a muddy intangible waste of dense water.

It was as clear as air, and the electric search-light dispelled the gloom, so that the submarine navigators could see objects half a mile ahead.

The bed of the ocean lay below them a hundred feet or more.

And a wonderful sight it was.

To attempt to describe all the various and beautiful forms of submarine life would be impossible. There were strange aquatic plants, curious shells, huge sea monsters, vari-colored fish, coral reefs, cities, forests and hills.

All these various things passed kaleidoscope like before the vision of the voyagers.

The bars were removed from the cabin windows and here Prof. Giles sat speechless with wonder.

"If I were to die to-morrow!" he declared. "I would count my life well lost for this mighty privilege."

"We are in the edge of the Gulf Stream now!" declared Frank. "Wait until we get down to the Equator."

"What then?"

"We will encounter a species of fish and plant life which lives in suspension."

"In suspension?"

"Yes, so deep are the waters there. There are many of these various forms of life could not exist at those depths. Indeed, the submarine boat could not descend safely to those depths."

"I understand. The pressure would be too great."

"Exactly."

"But this suspended plant and fish life—where does it get nutrition?"

"Ah, not more than a third of the submarine plants get their subsistence from the soil," replied Frank.

"You think not?"

"I know it. The ocean is full of organisms which such plants feed upon. Their specific gravity holds them where they are. Those plants could not sink deeper."

"Wonderful!"

"So far as the illusion goes. You would never know but that you were traveling over the ocean bed just the same as here. Drop a heavy object, however, and it goes crashing through to greater depths."

"I shall be glad to view that interesting phenomenon!" said Prof. Giles. "I shall make a report of it to our society."

"It will be good material."

At that moment there was a sudden shock.

Both men were thrown from their feet. Things in the cabin rattled about furiously.

"Mercy on us! What was that?" gasped the professor.

"We struck something!"

"I should say so!"

Barney was in the pilot-house. Frank sprang thither.

"What was the matter?" he asked.

"Shure, sor, it was only a big shark got plumb in ther way of ther boat," declared Barney.

"Did we hit him?"

"Shure, we cut him in two loike a piece av cheese, sor."

Frank laughed, as did the professor.

"It would be well for sharks and such like to keep out of our way," declared Frank. "I wouldn't like to encounter a whale though."

"That would be bad."

"Well, rather. But I have sharpened the ram of the boat so that it would cut like a razor."

For the rest of the day the submarine boat kept on.



Two days passed, and Frank reckoned that they were somewhere in the vicinity of the Bermudas.

"Will we stop there?" asked Mayhew.

"We will not stop unless necessary, until we reach the Pacific," declared Frank. "I intend there to make the Isle of Juan de Fernandez. We will go on shore and visit the scenes of the famous Robinson Crusoe. It will rest the engines, and I may have to do a little repairing on them."

"That will be grand!" cried the professor, enthusiastically. "Count me in on that every time."

The next day, as the professor was at his post, he gave a sudden, sharp cry.

"Frank!"

The young inventor was in the gun room. He heard the startled cry and at once rushed out.

"What?" he cried.

"Come here—quick!"

Frank rushed to the window. The professor pointed to a huge black object in the distant glare of the search-light.

"A sunken ship!"

Such indeed it was.

The professor looked eagerly at Frank.

"Would it be too much to ask?" he said.

"Do you want to visit it?"

Mayhew nodded in reply.

Frank shouted to Barney:

"Barney, check the propeller and stand down for that sunken wreck. The professor wants to see it."

"All right, sor."

The submarine boat now drew rapidly near the wreck.

The voyagers saw that it was a full rigged ship.

But the masts were broken, the rigging and sails rotted, and the hull had begun to fall apart.

That it had been the victim of a storm seemed possible until the electric boat drew alongside.

Then Frank pointed to some gaping holes in the side and said:

"Those are shot holes. She was sunk by a privateer or a pirate."

At once all were interested in the sunken ship.

The professor studied the hull intently.

"I wish we could ransack her," he finally said.

"We can."

The professor looked astounded.

"What do you mean?" he cried.

"Just what I say. If you wish to visit her decks you shall do so."

Prof. Mayhew could hardly believe his senses.

### CHAPTER III.

#### ON BOARD THE SUNKEN SHIP.

"You are not joking, Frank?"

"Of course not!"

"And you really mean it?"

"Why certainly."

"But—"

"Well, what?"

"How on earth are you going to do it, I'd like to know?"

"Why, simply put on diving suits."

"Oh!"

The professor drew a deep breath.

"But won't that be risky?"

"Not a bit."

"If the life lines should—"

"But I don't use life lines. These diving suits are my own peculiar invention, and you can travel safely for hours anywhere under the sea."

"Well, I should like to see them."

"Pomp," said Frank, peremptorily, "go below and bring up three of the diving suits. We will visit the wreck. Barney, you are to remain here until we return."

The order was obeyed.

The submarine boat was allowed to rest on the bed of the ocean, about fifty feet from the wreck.

The interim was all a surface of smooth white sand, and excellent footing.

Frank now exhibited the diving-suits which were his own invention. They were wonderful in design.

A helmet simply fitted over head and shoulders. Upon the back there was strapped a large cylindrical reservoir and a chemical apparatus for the circulation and manufacture of fresh air similar to that employed in the boat.

Heavy weights were placed upon the feet; the diver was then equipped.

With these suits on, the three explorers proceeded to leave the boat.

This was done in an original and peculiar manner.

In the side of the boat was built a vestibule.

Into this the divers stepped and shut a hermetically sealed door. Then they simply opened an outer door, allowed the vestibule to fill with water and walked out on deck.

They then climbed over the side and stood upon the bed of the ocean.

To cross the intervening distance to the wreck was an easy job.

Each carried at his belt stout lines, a hatchet and a pike. These were for practical use.

Frank Reade, Jr. led the way. Pomp was close behind him and the Professor in the rear.

As they drew near the hulk it was seen that she was a large craft of the clipper pattern. In her day she must have been a fine ship.

The hull of the ship was covered with seaweed and aquatic growth. With difficulty a line was passed over the rail and all clambered up to the deck.

Some of the timbers had rotted away and there were gaping apertures in the deck.

It was necessary to use great care that they did not fall through one of these.

And as they clambered over the rail a vast number of fish darted out of the dark depths, some of them of most prodigious size.

The only way that one of the divers could communicate with the other was by placing their helmets together and shouting very loudly. Even then it was a faint whisper and not easily understood.

But the professor who wished to try the experiment drew near Frank and spoke. He shouted loudly.

But Frank did not hear until their helmets were together. Then he heard the professor say:

"Do you think there is any danger of sharks attacking us?"

"Certainly!" replied Frank.

"There don't seem to be any in sight?"

"No, but one might appear any time. It is well to be on guard!"

"All right."

After this the professor kept a good lookout for the deadly sea monsters.

Frank proceeded cautiously across the deck to the rotting stairs which led down into the cabin.

Here he beckoned to the others to follow him.

He touched a little spring and an electric light flashed in a small globe upon the top of his helmet.

This dispelled the gloom in the companionway. Frank slowly made his way down the stairs.

The cabin was at once lit up. The water was a trifle cloudy as the motion of the divers riled it, but yet every object could be plainly seen.

There was the cabin table, and upon it were a number of half eaten pewter mugs and a silver flagon. These crumbled to powder at the mere touch.

Chairs were at the table and in one of these was a skeleton, almost reduced to nothingness.

The furnishings of the cabin were gone, having succumbed to the effects of time and the water.

Passing through this cabin the explorers reached the forward hold and here they came to a closed door.

A touch, however, caused it to fall to pieces.

Passing into the compartment beyond, which had neither window or deadeye a horrible sight was revealed.

Six crumbling skeletons lay upon the floor with chains encompassing them.

The truth was plain; they were prisoners aboard the ship, and had been left to drown in the cabin like rats in a trap.

It was a horrible sight to contemplate. With a shiver the divers passed from the spot.

Forward still further they came to the main deck, and here were several untrucked cannon and more skeletons.

Moldering weapons lay about, and there was every evidence that a fierce fight had taken place.

In the lower hold were provisions and stores, of course long since gone to decay.

There was nothing of value to be found, for the action of water and time had destroyed all.

No log, of course, was preserved to tell the dread story of the ship's fate.

This might only be guessed at. It was safe to assume, however, that she had been a merchant vessel, and had either been looted and sunk by a pirate or a privateer.

What her nationality, it was not even possible to learn. Not the slightest clew was to be had.

If there had been a name upon her hull it was obliterated. The name and story of the ship's fate must forever remain a mystery.

The professor secured several strange specimens of shell fish from the cabin walls to repay him for his visit. Then all started to return to the submarine boat.

Climbing the stairway, they once more came out on deck.

The glare of the submarine boat's search-light flooded the deck, and the vicinity. Objects were plainly visible, far and near.

And just as they reached the rail, the contingency which Prof. Mayhew dreaded came.

Up from the lower depths there suddenly darted a monstrous body. It flashed around them like a meteor.

"The shark!" gasped the professor, instinctively feeling for his ax.

Then he saw the wide open jaws swooping down upon Pomp. The shark had turned upon his back, and meant to swallow the ducky if he could.

There was not a moment to lose.

The professor yelled, but his voice did not go beyond his helmet. The next moment the shark struck Pomp.

It had intended to seize the negro in its powerful jaws. Had it succeeded, it would have been the end of Pomp.

But as fortune had it, the ducky at that moment saw the huge body bearing down upon him.

He had not time to more than drop in his tracks.



The lower jaw, or rather the upper one or snout of the shark, struck Pomp between the shoulders.

Over the rail he went like a flash. The shark flashed past the professor and Frank, prostrating both.

Pomp fell into the soft sands under the vessel's hull.

He was unhurt but badly frightened. However, he leaped to his feet and looked for his companions.

The shark had shot a hundred yards away, leaving a whirling wake, but it now turned and shot upward.

The divers knew that this was merely to prepare for another downward attack, and there was a possibility that this time it might succeed.

Frank seized the ship's rail with one hand and drew a long knife. The professor did the same.

It was certain to be a fight to the end, for the shark would never give up the battle until killed.

There was no other way but to attempt the killing of the monster.

Pomp was for the nonce safe.

But the shark had aimed his course for Frank and the professor.

So lightning-like were the fish's motions that they were nearly taken off their guard.

They had just time to see a long dark body shooting like a thunderbolt down upon them from above.

The white belly of the shark gleamed for a bare instant in the glare of the electric light.

Then Frank bent low down and just missed the reeking jaws.

Up went the knife, and a large rent was torn in the monster's side.

Red blood suffused the waters, and the shark apparently was convulsed, for it vanished, threshing the water into a whirl.

Frank motioned to the professor, and both dropped over the rail.

They found Pomp just about to climb up again.

Putting their helmets together, Frank cried:

"I think I struck a vital part. If so he will not return."

"Pray Heaven you have!" cried the professor. "It will be a fortunate escape for us."

"Golly, Marse Frank," shouted Pomp, "I done fink we bettah go back to de Tortoise."

"And we will," replied Frank; "but let us wait here a short while for the sake of safety."

This was done. They crouched for a time under the hull of the sunken vessel.

But the shark did not come back.

There was no doubt but that Frank's stroke had proved fatal and he was killed. This was good news.

The three divers now returned in safety to the Tortoise.

Barney greeted them eagerly.

It was their first trip under the sea in the new diving suits. On the whole it had been a success.

The journey was now resumed and once more the Tortoise went shooting through the water.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### ON ROBINSON CRUSOE'S ISLAND.

THE days passed and still the Tortoise kept on her southern course under the sea.

Many wonders were seen by the voyagers, many strange sights which would fill volumes.

Mighty submarine valleys were traversed, terrible abysses crossed, coral reefs and forests, sunken wrecks, strange sea monsters, and many other things too numerous by far to mention.

There was a powerful fascination in this species of submarine travel for Prof. Mayhew.

The old man would sit for hours by the great observation windows of the Tortoise and never tire of the many sights which, kaleidoscope like, flashed before his vision.

It was very seldom that Frank allowed the Tortoise to rise to the surface, and then it was only for the purpose of getting bearings.

One day he announced that they were in Cape Horn waters.

But this might have been known by the fact that the water was much colder than any they had yet encountered.

It became necessary to make use of the electric heaters, which kept an even temperature aboard the Tortoise.

The character of the marine life now changed very materially. Whales and seals and fishes peculiar to Arctic waters were encountered.

The bed of the ocean here was very rocky indeed.

It was hard to find even a good spot among the kelp and jagged rocks for the Tortoise to rest when a halt was made.

But in due course the Cape was rounded and the submarine voyagers were in the South Pacific.

Frank now set his course for the isle of Juan de Fernandez. The run northward was through calm waters and was quickly made.

One morning Frank walked into the pilot house, saying:

"Let her go to the surface, Barney. We must be near Fernandez!"

"Shure, sor, an' I reckon we are," cried the Celt heartily. "Shure, sor, the bed of the ocean begins to show it!"

This was true. It was easy to tell when land was near from the change in the color and motion of the water as well.

Barney pressed the lever which opened the pneumatic valves. The reservoir was quickly forced up, the water being expelled, and the boat went to the surface like a cork.

As the Tortoise sprung dripping from the ocean depths and rested upon the surface sunlight was all about.

The calm surface of the Pacific was visible beneath a cloudless sky. It was early in the day.

The search-light's rays were at once dispensed with. Then all instinctively looked for the island.

"There it is!" cried Prof. Mayhew, pointing to the north.

A mere speck upon the horizon it seemed. But the submarine boat quickly covered the intervening distance.

Soon the rocky cliffs and waving palms came into view. Then the Tortoise anchored in a little bay.

It was an easy matter to get out a small boat and paddle to the shore. Pomp was left aboard the Tortoise.

Frank and the professor and Barney went ashore. They stood upon the shore of the famed island home of Robinson Crusoe, the most famous of castaways.

A rock near bore the name of Alexander Selkirk.

There were a few inhabitants upon the isle. For a small sum a representative of these showed the party to Crusoe's Cave, the lookout hill, and other places connected with the life of the recluse.

It was all very interesting and the party were well repaid.

Prof. Mayhew particularly was gratified. He made notes most profusely.

After a time, however, they returned to the Tortoise.

Frank now proceeded to busy himself with the repairing of the engines and general overhauling.

He found some of the bearings badly worn. It had been a long, hard trip, and this was not at all to be wondered at.

Two days the Tortoise lay off the island of Juan Fernandez.

Water was brought from the shore and the engines were carefully overhauled.

Then Frank cried:

"Now for the North Pacific valley and the submarine mountain. There is work ahead for us now."

"I am glad to hear that," cried Prof. Mayhew, enthusiastically. "I am ready for it."

The Tortoise shortly after leaving Juan de Fernandez went beneath the surface. Frank set his course and the long voyage was begun.

The ocean for some distance was exceedingly shallow. But it gradually deepened as they approached the equator.

No incident of more than passing interest occurred until they were off the Walker Islands, about ten degrees north latitude.

Here the submarine boat came upon a curious formation of the ocean bed.

It really seemed as if some mighty continent had sunk into the depths and buried a vast civilization.

There were appearances of roads, of paved thoroughfares and crumbling walls as well as divisions of land. But all of course was to a large extent covered with sea weeds.

"Bejabers, I should think it was a sunken country!" cried Barney in amazement. "Shure it luks as if some av the omadious moight be down there now!"

"A nation under the sea!" cried Prof. Mayhew. "How wonderful and romantic that would be!"

"I don't fink yo' will fin' any ob dem people alibe jes' de same!" averred Pomp with a grin; "dey am poety dead afo' dis I reckon."

"But we are certainly passing over a region once inhabited!" averred the professor, positively. "Frank, why not go down a ways and take a look at the situation?"

"Why, certainly, if you desire to!" agreed Frank.

So the Tortoise was allowed to sink until within twenty feet of the bottom.

It was here necessary to proceed more cautiously for fear of striking some obstruction.

Barney turned on the search-light and sent its rays several hundred yards ahead into the darkness.

The result was astonishing.

The Celt fairly gasped for breath, and then shouted:

"Murtha, murtha, Mither Frank, wud yez cum here quick! Shure it's a city we have in front av us!"

"A city?"

"Yis, sor."

Frank and the professor sprung to the pilot-house window. The scene revealed ahead was certainly a wonderful one.

A city under the sea it certainly was, with domes, and spires and walls of purest glittering white. It was a most dazzling spectacle.

The voyagers looked at it with the sensations of those in a dream. For a time they could hardly believe their senses.

"A city under the sea!" gasped Frank.

"Yes," averred Mayhew. "We cannot deny that."

"So it seems."

"Bejabers, it luks as nathral as loife, an' reminds me av Dublin," said Barney, with sincerity.

"Golly, it done make me fink ob Richmond, Vorgeenia!" added Pomp.

"But how on earth did it come here at the bottom of the sea? Have we discovered an amphibious race of men?"

"Perhaps we have located the home of the mermen and mermaids of mythology," said Mayhew.

"I see no sign of life!"

"Except those beautiful rainbow fish."

"You are right."

"No, Frank, it is a sunken city. This is an island or possibly a continent which once was above the surface!"



"I believe you are right!"

"What a marvelous discovery this is for the benefit of archaeology," cried the professor, wildly. "A lost world, a sunken Atlantis."

All now waited with interest to reach the proximity of the sunken city. The Tortoise had soon approached within a few hundred feet of the walls.

Then Frank shut off the propellers.

He lowered the boat until it reached the bottom. Then he declared:

"We will explore that city!"

Of course the others were delighted. It was now Pomp's turn to guard the submarine boat. But he did not demur.

The diving-suits were brought out and donned.

Every preparation was made for a careful search of the sunken city. Then the explorers left the Tortoise.

They crossed kelp-strewn rocks until they were at the wall of the sunken city.

The search-light made all in the vicinity as plain as day. Moreover, each one of the explorers wore upon his helmet a small electric lamp.

This enabled them to proceed with the greatest of ease. As they reached the wall of the city Mayhew touched it with his hand and muttered to himself:

"Upon my word, it is coral!"

This was true.

To all outward appearance the white walls were coral. But the professor struck them a sharp blow with his ax.

This caused the coral to fall in huge cakes. Beneath was the surface of a kind of sandstone.

The coral was an outward coating or incrustation, and gave the city its pure white appearance.

This was very striking indeed. By signs the professor conveyed his discovery to the others.

The wall of the city at this juncture was altogether too high to scale without the aid of a ladder.

It was decided to seek along the wall for a gate or an entrance of some sort. This they did.

And as fortune had it, their efforts were soon rewarded.

They had not proceeded more than fifty yards when they came to a small opening similar to that called in ancient times the "needle's eye."

Through this the divers crept, and were in the sunken city.

A long avenue or street lay before them. Upon either side were massive buildings, with doors and windows, balconies and porticoes.

But in general the architecture was of a strange and unusual sort, such as they had never seen the like of before.

Down the street of the sunken city the explorers walked.

And as they did, to Frank and the professor there occurred many startling thoughts.

How many centuries had elapsed since these streets were thronged with an intelligent people, or these silent houses inhabited! It was a wonderful thing to contemplate, and made a deep impression on all.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE GIANT CRAB.

THAT the former inhabitants of the sunken city had been no ordinary people there was little doubt.

The extent of their city, the architecture of their houses was all evidence that they were to a high degree civilized. But one and all, with their unknown manners and customs, their speech and their personality, they had passed away.

The sea had swallowed them up.

Their fate was only one of its many mighty and strange secrets. It would never be given up.

For a long way the party wandered down the street.

Then they came to a broad, paved square. It was like walking on adamant to cross its paving of incrustated coral.

No tangle of seaweed, no litter of kelp was there here.

Every building, every detail was as plain and bold in relief as if chiseled from the whitest of marble.

Truly it was wonderful.

Had the divers been able to talk with each other, many were the expressions of approval they would have exchanged.

This paved square was fully two acres in extent.

Upon all sides rose high temple like structures. But whether they had originally been places of worship it was not easy to say.

Exchanging signs with his companions, Frank essayed to enter one of these buildings.

He mounted the steps and passed through a broad portico. Beyond this he saw a mighty high arched chamber.

In the center of this was a basin which looked as if it might have been a pool or a bath.

But there were no objects of vertu or any movable thing to be found. No remains of the lost race.

Doubtless time, the action of the water and of coral insects had long since destroyed their remains. Naught was left but the city and its walls of eternal white.

After thoroughly exploring the temple, the divers left it upon another street. Here they discovered a wonderful peristyle.

Beyond this was another basin which must have been a lake. That the lost people were navigators was certain, for here were built piers and quays of stone.

Crossing this into another square, they had started to return to the Tortoise when another exciting incident befell them.

Suddenly Barney gave a leap toward Frank, waving his arms in alarm.

But the young inventor had seen the approaching peril almost as quickly as he had.

Down the street there came a strange sea monster. It was of the crab species, but had longer legs, was capable of great speed, and had a tremendous beak and fierce eyes.

It was of giant size, and its yellow armor glittered in the electric light most strangely.

Straight for the three divers it came. That it regarded them as its prey seemed morally certain.

At once the divers started in retreat.

But the sea monster could take three strides in their one, and gained upon them every moment.

Frank, glancing over his shoulder, saw that they were certain to be overtaken.

The crab was not fifty yards in their rear. The Tortoise was a quarter of a mile away.

So Frank, who was in advance, set the example for the others by darting into a doorway.

Barney and the professor followed him.

They were in a small building, but the crab could not pursue them further, for its body was too large to get in the door.

But it took up a position at the door, and seemed disposed to wait patiently until its prey should come out.

Here was indeed a situation. The divers were now in a quandary. How were they to get back to the submarine boat.

It was a problem of no light sort.

But Frank Reade, Jr. was not to be baffled. His inventive genius soon hit upon a plan.

Placing his helmet close to the professor's he shouted:

"We must make our way back over the roofs. Perhaps we can do that."

"You are right," replied the scientist, "that is our best hope?"

"If not, we must give the monster battle. Of course we might succeed in getting the best of him in the end, but he might do us great injury before then."

"The safest way is the best."

"I think so."

So it was decided to try the house tops. These were flat after the ancient fashion. Stairs were found leading upward.

Once upon the roof it was easy work to cross from one to another.

This was done and the party were making rapid progress when suddenly a strange movement of the water caused them to look back.

The crab in some manner divined their purpose and was coming again in close pursuit.

They were not as yet half way to the Tortoise.

What was to be done?

It was a startling question.

Frank had thought of again seeking refuge in some building, but before a roof trap could be found the crab was upon them.

One of its claws seized Barney by the leg.

The Celt fell and went under the monster. It seemed at that moment as if the brave Irishman's fate was sealed.

But he made a savage blow at his foe with his knife.

It struck the crab in the lower part of its jaw and sent a stream of milky liquid out into the water.

In a moment the water was so clouded with this that not one in the party could see a foot in any direction.

Frank and the professor were the next moment also in the crab's clutches.

Then followed a fight such as none of them ever forgot. It was deadly and desperate.

It was a battle in the dark literally speaking. Its perils were multifarious.

For the puncturing of the air reservoir or the helmets of the diving suits meant death to the divers.

Aware of this each fought with desperation blended with horror. All they could do was to strike out at random.

But Frank succeeded in severing one of the crabs' claws with a blow of his ax. Barney was underneath thrusting right and left with his knife.

And it was left for him to strike the death blow.

By a stroke of luck he reached a vital part of the crab's anatomy. The monster reeled and fell over dead.

Then each of the divers crawled out unhurt save for a few bruises. It had been a narrow escape.

The milky cloud in the water disappeared, and they were once more able to see their way.

But the excessive effort had been a great tax upon the oxygen generators.

Each experienced a strange faintness, and knew that it was necessary to get back to the Tortoise at once.

So they started rapidly for the city wall. They reached it a few moments later and passed out.

There was the Tortoise all safe and sound, and Pomp was seen in the observation window.

The darky saw them approaching, and ran to fill the vestibule with water. The divers entered it a moment later.

Then the outer door was closed and the pump put to work. In a few moments the water was expelled from the vestibule and they entered the boat's cabin.



They quickly removed their helmets, and were glad to draw a breath of pure air. Then their experiences were discussed.

"My soul, I thought our time had come!" cried Prof. Mayhew. "That giant crab meant us for his prey."

"But he did not get us," said Frank.

"Bejabers, he nigh had the forceps on me!" cried Barney.

"That's so."

"Golly, but wouldn't he jes' hab had a mighty tough meal if he had got yo', l'ish!" said Pomp, badgeringly.

"Don't yez give me none av yez guff, naygur!" cried Barney. "Shure if he'd taken a taste av ye the blackness wud av blinded him feriver."

"Huh! I don't fink I be sech a fool as to let him."

"Yez cudn't help yerself."

"Dat's wha' yo' say. I don't fink no crab in dese watahs can catch me."

"Shure they'd be fools if they med the try," retorted Barney.

And so, with their usual amount of cheap talk and badgering, the two comical fellows went below.

Pomp soon had a steaming and toothsome meal ready of which all were more than willing to partake.

Barney did not forget the words of the darky and he mentally resolved to get square with him for a number of past grievances.

"Bejabers, I'll fix matters fer him so that he'll niver want to thry another thrick on me," averred the Celt, confidently.

Barney went about his scheme in a very systematic manner.

In clearing out the reservoir the day before he had come across a queer kind of water spider or deep sea crab, which had some of the propensities of the electric eel.

Contact with this peculiar little shell-fish gave one a stinging pain like that of the common stinging nettle found in every pasture in America.

This little creature Barney had carefully bottled up.

"Bejabers," he chuckled, "I'll fix his nibbs now. Shure he'll niver luk cross-eyed at me agin!"

Pomp never suspected a joke. Thus far during the voyage they had enjoyed perfect harmony. The darky was constrained to believe that it would continue.

But right here was where he made his mistake.

There was a very large-sized surprise in store for him.

While Pomp was cooking the dinner, Barney crept down into the darky's state-room.

Here he placed the crab between the sheets of Pomp's bunk, and just where the darky's toes must rest when he should stretch out.

Then the Celt went above stairs and about his duties.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A SERIOUS MISHAP.

BUT Barney could not keep a straight face that evening. He chuckled and laughed in his sleeve and nigh betrayed himself to Pomp several times.

But yet the darky suspected nothing.

The Tortoise had left the white city and was shooting northward toward Hawaii. Frank hoped the next day to get into the Tropic of Cancer.

From thence it would not be a long run to the vicinity of the Sandwich Islands. Above them he hoped to make the North Pacific Valley.

The Tortoise was standing up to her work well, and had proved a staunch little vessel.

The dinner was partaken of and much enjoyed by the Tortoise's crew. Then all repaired to the cabin.

Barney brought out his fiddle and played some rollicking Irish jigs. Pomp produced his banjo and sang some plantation melodies with fine and humorous effect.

Then somewhere later all turned in.

It was Pomp's first watch. Barney slept the sleep of the just until midnight. Then he aroused and went to relieve Pomp.

"I done fink yo' am right on time to-night, chile," said the darky, as Barney appeared. "Wha' am de meanin' ob dat?"

Barney did not tell the real reason for this. He only grinned, and said:

"Begorra, yez had niver ought to kick at the loikes av that."

"Ain' gwine to, chile," retorted Pomp. "So long! I'se gwine fo' to git some sleep."

"I hope yez will have pleasant dreams," said Barney, with irony.

"Dat's a'right, l'ish. A clear conscience am bound fo' to do dat."

"Begorra, I'm afraid yez ain't clear, thin," muttered Barney, as he went into the pilot house.

Pomp's state-room was beside Barney's and both were just forward of the engine room. It was easy for Barney to hear every move made there.

He heard Pomp thrown off his heavy shoes and then turn into his bunk. The Celt straightened up.

One, two, three minutes passed. The darky made an effort to straighten out in his bunk.

The next moment there pealed upon the air a yell which was terrific in its exquisite thrill of agony. Another and another followed, and then into the cabin raced a nude and frantic darky.

Up and down he went, like a raving maniac.

"Massy sakes alibe, I'se killed! I'se bit by a tarantler! I'se a dead coon! Oh, Lor' sabs dis chile!"

The awful racket brought Frank and Mayhew into the cabin in their night clothes, but Barney could not get there.

The Celt was rolling around upon the floor of the pilot-house convulsed with laughter, which he could not restrain.

"What on earth is the matter, you black rascal?" cried Frank, angrily.

"Oh, Marse Frank!" screamed the coon, "I'se done killed fo' suah!"

"Killed?"

"Yes, sah!"

"Nonsense! You're all right!"

"No, no sah! I'se gwine to die presently. I'se bit by a tarantler. I'se jes' gwine to commence pooty soon, an' dance till I jes' dances mah'sef to death!"

"Don't be a fool! There are no tarantulas aboard this boat! Where was it?"

"In mah bunk, sah!"

"Did you see it?"

"No, sah—but I felt it. Dis chile he knows de bite ob de tarantler ebery time!"

"Well, where did it bite you?"

"On mah toe, sah!"

Pomp held up the wounded member; but Frank could see no swelling or evidence of a wound.

"Pshaw! You are not hurt!" he cried, angrily. "Don't be foolish! I shall have to see the spider to believe it!"

"He am in mah bunk, sah!"

"Well, let us find him!"

Frank and the professor at once went to Pomp's stateroom.

The bunk was overhauled and the crab found. Pomp's eyes stuck out like saucers.

"Massy sakes!" he cried. "Am dat wha' it was? Fo' de Lor' I done fo't it was a tarantler!"

"But the mystery is, how did it come there?" said Frank, with a wink at the professor. "Barney!"

The Celt came soberly out of the pilot-house. But as he saw the expression of Pomp's countenance he could contain himself no longer.

He burst into a perfect roar of laughter. In fact he could not contain himself.

Pomp's eyes blazed with wrath.

"It was jes' de wo'k ob dat nasty l'ishman!" he cried. "Marse Frank, he done dat, fo' suah!"

Frank waited until Pomp had finished berating Barney, then he said sternly:

"Barney, are you guilty of this trick?"

"Is it guilty of that, sor, yez wud have me say?"

"Yes!"

"Yis, sor!"

"Then you put this crab into Pomp's bunk, did you?"

"I did, sor!"

Barney now hung his head for he never liked to be reprimanded by Frank. He was duly ashamed.

"I hardly know how to punish you," said Frank, sternly, "but I may say that I do not like such jokes. Don't let it occur again!"

Frank would have read Barney a lecture then and there, but at that moment a startling thing happened.

There was a terrific crash, all articles lying loose in the cabin were flung about, and the voyagers themselves were thrown upon their faces.

Mayhew and Frank were the first to regain their feet.

"For the love of Heaven, what was that?" cried the professor, wildly.

But Frank knew well what it was.

He was quick to act.

He heard the whirring of the dynamos, the click of the propeller shaft and felt a peculiar vibration of the boat.

The Tortoise had come to a sudden stop.

Frank sprang into the pilot-house. He saw at once what was the trouble.

In the brief moment that all had been absent from the pilot-house, the boat had been running at random.

And it had run its ram between the stone sides of a mountain chasm, which had loomed up in its path. There it was tightly wedged.

The situation was by no means a pleasant one. Frank had no means of knowing just how much damage was done.

But he listened for the gurgling of water and was relieved at its absence. The boat had not sprung a leak.

There was no immediate danger of being drowned like rats in a trap. But the situation was serious enough for all that.

The Tortoise was wedged in the rocks, and whether it could ever be extricated or not was a question.

Frank turped the search-light upon the rocks and scanned them closely.

He saw that the ram was wedged solidly in the chasm. He reversed the electric engines.

But still the boat did not move. It was not in their power to extricate it.

"Mercy! What will become of us if the boat is not extricated?" asked Mayhew.

"We shall die!" replied Frank.

"What a horrible fate!"

"It is certainly terrible."

"But—it looks as though we were upon the side of a mountain."

"So we are!"



"Listen!"

A strange and ominous sound now came to the hearing of all. It was like the distant rumble of an earthquake.

It was repeated at intervals.

"What is it?" asked Mayhew.

"I cannot say!" replied Frank. "It may be a submarine volcano."

"A submarine volcano?"

"Yes."

"Wonder of wonders!" cried the professor, for the moment forgetting their peril. "We must see it before we go home!"

"Very likely we shall if we can only break away from here," said Frank, "but that don't look very encouraging just now."

"To be sure it does not!"

"Golly, Marse Frank," cried Pomp, "am dar no way we'se gwine fo' to git out ob dis fix?"

"We shall see!"

Frank ordered the diving-suits brought up. Donning one he went out on deck.

He went to the extreme end of the vessel's bow and examined the ram.

He saw that it was not badly damaged but that it was firmly held by the collapse of a section of the ledge.

Frank studied the situation a moment. Then he went back to the cabin.

"Well?" asked Mayhew, after he had removed his helmet. "What do you think of our chances, Frank?"

"I must say that I do not think them of the best."

"You don't?"

"No!"

"Then we are lost!"

"Not yet. I shall make an effort to dislodge that rock with dynamite. It is all a matter of luck. If it falls the right way, we shall slide off all right. If it falls the other way, it is sure to crush the boat."

"Let us pray then that it will fall the right way."

"Amen to that!"

Frank now took a couple dynamite cartridges. These he placed under the ledge, connecting them with a wire from the dynamos.

The current was turned on.

There was a shock, an upheaval of the ledge, the water surged about the submarine boat furiously.

It seemed for a moment as if the tons of rock were certain to fall upon the vessel.

But they did not.

The heavy mass missed the hull by an inch. Then the engines were reversed and the Tortoise slid off the rocks.

Barney and Pomp made a mutual vow to perpetrate no more jokes upon each other the remainder of the voyage.

There was no more sleep that night for the voyagers.

Great interest was now excited in the submarine volcano near which they were. The Tortoise at once proceeded slowly in the direction of the thunderous sounds.

Suddenly the air in the cabin began to grow oppressive.

The party fairly gasped for breath, and were almost prostrated. Horror seized them all.

"What on earth is the matter?" cried Mayhew.

"I pray that the generators have not got out of order!" exclaimed Frank. "If so our oxygen is shut off and we will all stifle before we can get to the surface!"

Frank rushed through the cabin to the small room in which were the oxygen generators.

## CHAPTER VII.

### POMP'S DISAPPEARANCE.

In this terrible exigency it was but natural to suppose that these important life sustaining machines were out of order.

But as Frank reached the generator, he saw that it was intact and was faithfully at work.

But already the professor had solved the mystery.

The peculiar appearance of the water outside had caused him to study it a moment. In doing so he placed his hand against the plate glass of the observation window.

It was very hot.

"Frank!" he shouted. "I have it!"

"Well!"

"The sea is hot. We are in boiling water. We will be cooked alive if we stay here!"

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed Frank. "Of course the internal fires of the volcano account for this!"

But as Prof. Mayhew had said, they were in deadly peril of being cooked alive in the cabin of the Tortoise. It was necessary to at once get out of that element.

But which way should they go? Frank opened the lever wide and the Tortoise shot forward.

As luck had it, the submarine boat quickly reached cooler waters. Here she cruised about for awhile.

But nothing could be seen of the submarine volcano.

And this was as near as the party were able to get to it. They simply felt its influences but could not see its eruptions.

Finally Frank set his course away from it to the northward. Soon they were out of hearing of the rumbling sound.

Several days the Tortoise forged on its way through the deep seas, still keeping to the northward.

And one morning Frank declared:

"We are at this moment just off the island of Hawaii."

"Good!" cried Prof. Mayhew, "then we ought soon to be in the North Pacific Valley!"

"It is possible that we shall be before to-morrow night."

"I shall be glad of that. I am anxious to reach the submarine mountain."

But just at that moment a great cry came from Barney who was in the pilot-house.

Then the Tortoise came to a sudden halt.

"Mercy on us! What is the matter?" cried the professor, hobbling away forward. But Frank passed him.

"Shure, Misther Frank, it's clean into the cinter av the airth we are!" cried Barney.

And indeed it seemed as if the Celt was right.

For, glancing out of the pilot-house windows, the voyagers saw in the glare of the electric light that above them and on each side were the roof and walls of a cavern.

What was more all was of the brightest red coral. It was a wondrously beautiful sight.

The sudden lowering of the roof had prevented the Tortoise going deeper into the cavern.

Just in time Barney had seen it, and checked the boat else she would have lost her masts.

How the Celt had allowed the submarine boat to run into the place he could not imagine.

But he had done so, and they were in the heart of a coral cave.

So wondrously beautiful was the scene that Prof. Mayhew cried:

"Oh, Frank, let us rest here awhile. I would much like to procure some of those wonderful specimens of coral."

"You shall," replied Frank. "We will explore the cave."

This delighted Pomp, for it was his turn to leave the Tortoise. Barney was willing, however.

"Bejabers, but I give yez fair warnin' to luk out fer big crabs," he cried. "Shure, they'll niver let the loikes av yez off."

"Don' yo' fret about dis chile," sniffed Pomp. "Dar ain' no crab gwine fo' to catch him."

The diving suits were donned, and then the three divers left the boat.

They were soon upon the floor of the cavern.

It was a dazzlingly beautiful sight which was spread before their eyes.

The cavern arches of variegated coral extended as far as the eye could reach. Whether any sea monster inhabited them or not was a question.

However, the party wandered on, the professor securing many beautiful specimens.

Deep in the arches of the coral cave, where the rays of the searchlight could not penetrate, all was inky blackness.

But the helmet lights partly dispelled this, and the party kept wandering on, encountering new wonders at every step.

Pomp was the first one to encounter a mishap. This was brought about in a very peculiar fashion.

The darky was a trifle in advance of his companions and in peering about, saw a strange looking object seemingly imbedded in the wall of the cavern.

The darky, upon the impulse of the moment, put out his hand and touched it, fancying it some strange species of jewel imbedded there.

It was smooth and glistening like a ruby, but it yielded to his touch.

"Golly, massy!" thought the darky, "dat am a queer fing! Whoop! fo' de Lor' I'se in fo' it."

There was a peculiar hissing sound in the cavern, a motion of the apparent wall of the cave and two long, wriggling arms shot out and enveloped Pomp.

The truth flashed across the darky's mind in that instant.

That which he had supposed a jewel or precious stone was really the eyeball of a sea monster of the cuttle fish species.

The monster now had him in its awful clutches. For a moment Pomp believed himself lost.

He was instantly whisked out of sight through a hole in the wall of the coral cave.

He felt the embrace of the monster about him. Then the sensation of being dragged away to its lair.

Instinctively in his terror Pomp began to use his ax. He dealt heavy blows at his foe.

At first these seemed to have no effect. But just as the deadly coil of the monster's tentacles were crushing the life out of him he succeeded in severing one of them.

The water was densely impregnated with the monster's blood. But Pomp kept on laying about him.

Frank and the professor were not able to come to his relief, for they really did not know what had become of him.

He had vanished so suddenly and unexpectedly that they were taken wholly by surprise.

The professor made startled signs to Frank.

"What has become of Pomp?" he asked in this manner.

"I don't know," replied Frank. "What can it mean?"

Then they began to search for the darky.

But they could find no trace of him. They were indeed alarmed. It was a complete mystery to them.

Time passed and Pomp did not show up. After a long while it occurred to Frank that possibly the darky had returned to the Tortoise.



So he decided to return thither at once. This they did. Barney met them at the vestibule.

As soon as Frank could remove his helmet, he asked:

"Where is Pomp?"

Barney's eyes opened wide.

"The naygur, sor? Shure, I've not seen him at all."

"You haven't?"

"No, sor!"

Frank turned in consternation to the professor, whose face was pale and startled.

"Something has happened to Pomp."

"That is certain," agreed Mayhew.

"What can it be?"

"I really cannot imagine. I certainly hope no harm has befallen him."

Frank picked up his helmet and put it on again. His face wore a resolute expression.

"Where are you going?" asked Mayhew.

"I am going to find him. I shall not leave this cavern until I learn his fate. Pomp is too valuable a man to lose."

Barney with a light of eagerness in his eyes now stepped forward.

"Och, Misther Frank!" he exclaimed, eagerly, "shure an' wud yez be ather lettin' me go wid yez?"

Frank looked at the professor. The scientist nodded his head, saying:

"I am quite willing. Barney can be of more service to you!"

The Celt with delight hastened to put on the diving suit. In a few moments he was all ready.

Frank and Barney were about to leave the vestibule when a startling thing occurred. Suddenly there was a dull trembling, a fearful vibration, and the walls of the coral cave seemed tumbling in.

The Tortoise was given a fearful shock, and Frank heard the reservoir lever fly open. With horror he tried to reach the pilot house.

But the next moment the boat shot backward and out of the coral cave, while the reservoir being cleared, it began to rise with the rapidity of thought.

Up it went through the hundreds of fathoms of water like a cork coming to the surface.

In that brief instant Frank Reade, Jr., had realized what it all meant. There had been an earthquake under the sea and the Tortoise had narrowly escaped annihilation.

Only a miracle had saved the party from destruction. But the horrible thought came to all which Prof. Mayhew expressed.

"What of Pomp?"

"Arrah, an' it's all up wid ther naygur!" wailed Barney. "Shure, it's a broth av a lad he was, too, an' to think he should die in such a manner!"

"Heavens!" exclaimed Frank, wildly, "we cannot give Pomp up in this way! He must be saved!"

"Bejabers, let's go back down there an' niver come up till we find him dead or alive!" cried Barney.

Frank at once sprung into the pilot-house.

He was resolved to follow out Barney's suggestion. The earthquake was over, and probably would not recur. There was little danger now.

So he pressed the lever and filled the reservoir.

Down sank the Tortoise.

Down she went, until once more the bottom of the sea was seen beneath them.

Then Frank steadied the boat by pressing the lever, and it rested securely once more upon the sands.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### POMP'S ADVENTURES.

BUT what of Pomp?

We left him battling with the sea monster in the depths of the coral cave. Pomp was a plucky fellow.

He was not disposed to give up and die without a struggle.

He fought madly for his life, laying about him lustily with his ax.

The keen bladed weapon cut through the shell of the monster crab like cheese. Off came one leg after another. The monster tried to get the darky into its horrid beak.

But Pomp avoided this. He struck savage blows at it with the ax.

The result was that the sea monster very quickly began to relax its hold. The water was suffused with blood.

Then the giant crab lay quite still; it was dead.

The victory was Pomp's, and a more delighted darky could hardly be imagined.

"Golly!" he muttered. "I'se jes' glad fo' to git out ob dat ar scrape. I done fo't fo' a time dat dis chile was a gone coon."

Pomp now pulled himself together and crawled away from the crab.

All the while that the struggle had been going on the monster had been dragging him deeper and deeper into the cavern.

The glare of the lamp on his helmet showed him the vicinity quite plainly.

But he was at a loss to know what direction to take to return to his friends.

There had been no trail left upon the cavern floor to guide him. However, Pomp struck out in the direction from which he believed he had come.

He kept on at a rapid pace.

Through one passage after another he went. Then he became conscious of a dampening fact.

"Golly fo' glory!" he muttered. "I'se done lost fo' suah."

There was no disputing this fact.

He was lost!

Lost in a coral cave at the bottom of the sea. The full enormity of the reflection was upon him.

He knew that the chemical reservoir upon his back must become exhausted in a few hours.

This would mean death by suffocation or drowning. It was an awful thing to contemplate.

With brain almost bursting Pomp halted and tried to make use of his reasoning powers.

He tried in every way to remember the points of the compass. But there was no way for there was nothing to guide him.

The only thing the despairing darky could do, was to wander on at random.

This he did for some time.

Then becoming fatigued he sank tremblingly down upon a spur of coral to rest.

"Fo' de Lor' dis chile am done ruined!" he moaned. "I'se gwine to die fo' suah. Bress de Lor' I'se allus been a good servant ob de Lor'."

Then he began to pray, for Pomp was quite a religious coon.

This seemed to brace him up wonderfully.

"Sho' dar!" he muttered, finally. "Wha' am I gwine to gain by stayin' here, I done fink I might jes' as well keep on goin' somewhere." With which sensible reflection he arose and went on through the cavern arches.

For some time Pomp wandered on.

Suddenly he came out of the coral cave entirely, and saw the bed of the sea once more before him.

A bright idea struck him.

"I done fink I kin climb around ober dis oder side ob de cave," he muttered. "An' mebbe I kin fin' de Tortoise, or see de search-light."

At that moment he saw a distant faint streak of light shooting up through the water.

Instantly the darky saw that he had located the Tortoise, and a great cry of joy pealed from his lips.

"De good Lor' hab jis' answered mah prayer!" he muttered. "I'se gwine fo' suah to fin' de boat!"

Instantly Pomp set out for the distant streak of light.

But just as he was drawing near it an astonishing thing happened.

There was a sudden vibrating roar, a trembling of the ground. Pomp fell, and it seemed as if the weight of tons was upon him.

"Massy sakes! I'se done being crushed to death!" he wailed. "Wha' am all ob dis?"

It was lucky for Pomp that he was not in the coral cave at that moment.

It would certainly have been the end of him. The disturbance lasted but a few seconds, however.

Then all became calm again.

The darky scrambled to his feet. He could see that the bed of the sea had changed somewhat.

Schools of frightened fish were shooting here and there, and the darky realized what had happened.

"I done fink it was an earthquake!" he muttered. "Golly, dat coral cave am all crushed in!"

Then swift upon this came another horrible thought.

The Tortoise had been in the cave. Was it there now, crushed or forever confined, and its inmates dead?

Pomp's wool fairly stood on end. His teeth chattered.

"Massy sakes!" he gasped, "dat am fo' suah de end of Marse Frank an' all de rest. An' dat means tribulation fo' dis chile, too."

This was true. If the Tortoise was crushed, how was he ever to see the light of day again?

Hundreds of miles from land, under the deep Pacific, with but a few hours of life in the chemical reservoir left to him, certainly Pomp's predicament was a most awful one.

It would well have caused even the bravest of men to grow faint hearted and hopeless.

The darky looked for the glare of the search-light.

But it had disappeared.

How was he to know that the Tortoise had gone to the surface?

He could but believe that it was crushed in the coral cave.

However, he was determined not to abandon hope. With warrantable pluck he went on, determined to find the wreck of the Tortoise, if nothing else.

After a time he reached what was the mouth of the cave by which they had entered.

To his surprise he found this intact. The earthquake had done no damage here.

He also found footprints in the sand to prove that this was the spot where the Tortoise had been.

But the submarine boat was gone.

Pomp was puzzled.

What did it mean?

"Wha' on airth am dat boat gwine to?" he muttered. "Suah nuff, dey wouldn't go off an' leave dis chile!"

Then another horrible suspicion suggested itself to Pomp. Perhaps his friends had given him up for dead.

A cold sweat broke out all over him. Pomp sank down now, utterly hopeless and overcome.

"Oh, Lor' sabe dis chile!" he wailed. "I'se suah nuff gwine to die now. Wha'ebber shall I do? Lor' sabe me!"



Time passed. It seemed an eternity to Pomp. A drowsiness came over him. He yielded to it and sinking down slept.

This would have been the sleep of death but for a fortunate incident.

Frank and Barney upon leaving the Tortoise had started in the direction which they believed would eventually bring them to the mouth of the coral cave.

But they were unable to get the exact bearings.

For a long time they wandered on at random. Then fortunately they struck upon the right track.

Barney suddenly spied some tracks in the sand. These he followed to the mouth of the cave.

And here he came upon Pomp's sleeping form. The darky lay quite motionless, and both Frank and Barney believed him dead.

They imagined that the chemical reservoir had given out, and that the darky, if not dead, was dying.

Frank motioned to Barney and they picked Pomp up bodily. Of course this woke the darky.

Pomp sprung up, and seeing who they were, rushed upon them in wildest joy.

This was mutual, and the meeting between the three divers was a joyous one. They fairly embraced each other.

But it was useless to carry on a conversation there. Frank motioned the others to return to the Tortoise.

This move was at once executed. It was easy enough to find the boat by means of the electric light.

Then they went aboard, to find the professor anxiously awaiting them. It was a happy denouement of a thrilling affair.

Pomp told his story which was heard with interest. He was quite the hero of the hour.

Then, as all were hungry and fatigued, a good dinner was prepared of which they partook heartily.

Frank decided to remain where they were for the night, that they might get much needed sleep.

This was done, and all slept soundly for eight hours. Then they were once more astir and the Tortoise went on its way.

Thus far the submarine voyage had been replete with thrilling incidents enough to satisfy the most fastidious.

But there were even more exciting episodes in store for all. Frank announced a day later that they were near the entrance to the North Pacific valley.

"We shall find depths there," he declared, "to which it will be impossible for us to descend."

"I am anxious to reach and explore the submarine mountain," declared Prof. Mayhew.

"It will not be many days before you will have that privilege," declared Frank.

"I am glad to hear that."

But that very afternoon a marvelous sight was beheld. The Tortoise suddenly came upon it.

The electric search-light threw its rays many yards ahead and Barney, who was at the wheel, suddenly caught sight of an astounding spectacle.

They were just about entering a depression or valley which was as white as driven snow.

There were cliffs and crags and precipices and plateaus, but all were pure white in color.

It was not easy to at once understand what this material was of which the white valley was formed.

But Frank Reade, Jr., being called at once declared:

"It is marble and of the most magnificent quality. Only think of it, a valley of marble."

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE SUBMARINE MOUNTAIN.

"WONDERFUL!" cried Mayhew. "It is really a marble valley under the sea."

This was the truth. As the Tortoise drifted on through this beautiful valley of white the effect was grand.

Upon either side rose mighty heights for hundreds of feet, and everywhere was the same spotless white rock.

Even the fish that swam in this enchanted valley and the crabs and other shell fish were white.

Beyond all expression was the wonderful scene.

To attempt an adequate description of it would be impossible.

The electric light flashed from cliff to crag with dazzling brilliance. The voyagers gazed upon the scene spellbound.

"Well," exclaimed Prof. Mayhew, "I have never seen anything to equal this! It is sublime!"

"Certainly it surpasses all sights we have seen thus far!" said Frank.

"You are right."

"But look!"

Frank pointed to a cliff above.

The others looked thither and for a moment all was silence. There upon that high white cliff was the snow white statue of a woman.

Spellbound the voyagers gazed.

"A statue!" gasped the professor.

"Golly!" exclaimed Pomp. "Whoebber made it—I'd like to know?"

"Mebbe this valley was above the sea once same as the coral city bejabbers!" cried Barney.

"No," declared Frank, positively, "that is a marvelous thing, but the hand of man never cut that statue!"

"A freak of Nature?"

"Yes!"

This was seen to be a fact. They were now upon the other side of the block of marble, and this side bore no resemblance whatever to a statue.

The illusion was easily seen.

But it had certainly been a remarkable one. All were willing to admit this.

On up the marble valley the Tortoise now sped.

New wonders flashed by upon every hand. But at length the white marble began to disappear, and they came to the open sea once more.

A new wonder now appeared, however.

This was in the shape of an illimitless plain of sand like unto the Desert of Sahara.

For hours the Tortoise traveled over this. Then gradually the land began to sink and to be broken up into rough valleys and hills.

"Hurrah!" cried Frank. "We are in the North Pacific Valley."

"Good!" cried Prof. Mayhew. "Now for the mountain under the sea!"

"We will reach it by to-morrow if nothing breaks!"

A peculiar change was now noticed. The Tortoise no longer slid along with her easy noiseless motion.

She creaked and groaned and vibrated tremendously. Frank was constantly at the wheel.

"What does that mean?" asked the professor. "The bed of the ocean is fully a hundred feet below us."

"That is true," replied Frank, "but for the last few hours we have been rapidly going deeper."

"Ah, then we are beginning to feel the pressure of the water?"

"That is just it. Presently we shall cease to see the bed of the sea."

"What if we should attempt to keep it in sight?"

"We would be crushed like an egg-shell. The pressure upon these plate glass windows now is something tremendous. However, I hope that we shall soon reach the mountain."

It was true that the Tortoise had reached the greatest possible depth to which it was safe for her to descend.

A few feet deeper, and she would have been unable to resist the pressure.

As Frank had predicted, the bed of the sea soon disappeared from view.

So great was the depth now, that Frank found it necessary to ascend a hundred feet or more. The Tortoise labored heavily.

Thus the submarine boat kept on.

The run across the famous North Pacific Valley was one which the voyagers did not soon forget.

It was necessary to be constantly on the alert for the least depression might have been fatal.

It was with general relief therefore that next day Frank received word from Barney who was at the wheel, that there was ground visible beneath them.

Frank at once went forward and studied the situation.

The bed of the ocean here was rising rapidly in some places with sheer ascent.

It did not take the young inventor long to decide that they had at last reached the submarine mountain.

This announcement caused a cheer and Prof. Mayhew was himself much delighted.

It became necessary now to partly empty the reservoir so that the Tortoise might ascend the submarine slope.

Higher and higher they went until suddenly the top of the mountain was reached. It was itself half a mile under the sea so that the mighty depths of the great valley can be imagined.

Prof. Mayhew's plan was to rest the Tortoise upon the summit of the submarine mountain.

Then in their diving suits they might explore its summit and descend its sides as far as possible.

The professor expected to secure many valuable specimens, and also to establish the existence and the size of the mountain beyond all doubt.

Such a report to the Scientific Society, based upon the reliable evidence he had to offer, would make his everlasting fame and fortune.

It can therefore be easily understood why the professor was in such high spirits.

The search-light was employed to take a look at the vicinity.

The summit of the submarine mountain was broken into huge bowl-ers, deep pits and chasms.

There was every indication that it had once been an active volcano.

The Tortoise rested fairly upon the verge of what seemed to be the crater.

"Well, professor," cried Frank, "what are your plans? What shall we do now?"

"First of all let us explore the crater."

"You believe that the best move then?"

"Yes."

"Very good! I will accompany you. Barney and Pomp, we shall leave you aboard the Tortoise this time."

"All right, sir," replied Barney.

"But we shall take a small coil of wire with us and a sounder. If you hear a signal from us one of you must be ready to come to our relief."

"A' right, Marse Frank!" cried Pomp. "I'll jest do dat mahse'l."



"Will yez?" sputtered Barney. "That remains to be seen, me gossoon."

"Well, don't quarrel over it!" cried Frank. "It may be a serious emergency and no time for quarreling."

"Yez may be sure wan av us will be on hand, Misther Frank."

"Yo' kin jes' bet on dat!"

"All right," replied Frank. "Now, professor!"

"Well?"

"Are you ready?"

"Ay, or at least I shall be as soon as I get my helmet on."

"Then let us be off."

The two explorers hastily donned their diving suits. The reservoirs were freshly stocked with chemicals.

Then they were ready to go.

Entering the vestibule, the valve was turned and it filled with water. A few moments later both were out on deck.

Barney had been instructed to follow them with the search-light as long as possible.

This he proceeded to do.

The two divers made their way over the slippery ledges with some difficulty.

Each carried at his waist a long and strong line of steel rope—an invention of Frank's.

This was to be used in scaling cliffs or precipices, or in any case of emergency.

Down into the crater the two explorers crept.

Frank carried the signal wire, which was thread like, upon a spool. This he unwound as he went on.

There seemed no danger from sea monsters or huge fish of any kind. To all appearances there were none such in those waters.

Yet, this, of course, was hard to tell. Some hole in the rocks, some deep sea cavern might be their hiding-place.

But the two explorers gave no thought to anything of this kind.

They were all engrossed in the project before them. And so they kept boldly and patiently on.

After a time they reached the inner verge of the crater. Here it was smoother surface.

Traveling became much easier. What seemed like a mighty crust of lava occupied the center of the crater.

Suddenly, as they were crossing this, Mayhew halted.

He put his helmet close to Frank's, and shouted:

"Do you know I believe we are in deadly danger."

Frank was astonished.

"Why?" he asked.

"We are upon a thin crust of lava which has undoubtedly congealed here in ages past by the action of the water."

"Well, and what of that?"

"Why, only think! We do not know what depths are beneath us. Suppose it should give way?"

Frank experienced a chill.

He reached down and tapped the lava crust with his axe. It had a startling effect to be sure.

A small section of it caved in leaving an aperture. Frank saw that the crust was not more than two inches thick.

The enormity of the risk was at once apparent to him.

He arose and addressed the professor once more.

"Had we not better go back?"

"Go back?"

"Yes!"

The professor smiled at this thought. He raised his voice, and shouted:

"It is as far to return as to go straight across the crater. We must trust in Providence!"

"And go ahead?"

"Yes!"

"All right," declared Frank. "I am ready. Lead on!"

The words had barely left his lips when a most terrible thing happened all in the twinkling of an eye.

## CHAPTER X.

### INTO THE ABYSS.

The very thing the two explorers dreaded came to pass. The lava crust suddenly began to bend and sway.

Their weight upon it was no doubt responsible for this.

"My God!" cried Frank. "We are surely going down!"

"For your life; run!" cried Mayhew.

Of course neither heard the words of the other. They were too far apart. But that mattered not.

Each saw the proper move to make and made it.

The impulse was to get away from that dangerous spot. But each acted upon a different plan.

Frank took a backward leap toward the Tortoise. He instinctively realized that this was the safest thing.

He knew that this part of the lava crust had been tried.

But Prof. Mayhew did not do this. He sprang forward and toward the opposite side of the crater.

Fatal move!

It transpired that the lava crust grew thinner every step taken in that direction. It now crashed beneath him and he went out of sight.

All was done in a twinkling.

Frank stood aghast.

Before him yawned a mighty abyss. He had no means of knowing how deep it might be.

But it was certain that down into these awful depths the professor had fallen.

For the moment Frank forgot about personal peril.

"Keep up, Mayhew!" he shouted, forgetting that the professor could not hear him. "Don't give up! We'll save you!"

But of course no answer came back.

If the professor had shouted, Frank would not have heard him. For a moment the young inventor was motionless.

Then he crept to the edge of the abyss. It was useless to listen, so he flashed his helmet light down into the place.

To his joy he saw Mayhew.

When he went down through the lava crust, the professor had instinctively clutched at the water.

This brought his hands in contact with a spur of rock.

He slipped and slid along this for a moment, and then hung to it. Here he was suspended.

It was a peak of rock which rose in the middle of the crater, and was one of the supports of the lava crust.

Fortune was with Mayhew.

Beneath him he knew was a fearful abyss.

For aught he knew it might lead to the center of the earth.

It was fortunate for the professor that he was in water instead of air.

The former substance was so buoyant that he was enabled to hang to his position. Then suddenly Frank's helmet light blended with his own.

Instinctively the professor turned and saw Frank upon the other verge. He knew that it was impossible to speak to him, but he made a signal.

This Frank answered.

Then the young inventor uncoiled the rope at his waist. He was an expert at throwing a lariat.

Had it been in the air, he could easily have thrown it over Mayhew's shoulders.

But throwing a rope under water is another matter.

However, the weight of the rope was an important item in his favor. After several trials Frank managed to make it reach the mark.

The professor clutched the noose. It was but a few moments' work to slip it over his shoulders.

Then Frank braced himself.

The professor made a signal.

"All right!" muttered Frank.

The professor swung off the ledge. He swung across the abyss, and hung over the verge. Frank hung on to the line like grim death.

He began to draw up on it. Steadily he pulled his friend up to the edge of the lava crust.

Then there was a crumbling vibrating motion. The crust was bending. The weight was too great.

Even at that moment Frank could have saved himself.

It would only have been necessary for him to have dropped the rope and sprang back. That would have let his friend down into the depths.

Frank could not do this.

He was determined to die with the professor. He would risk and even give his life in the attempt to save him.

The next moment there was a commotion in the water. The crust gave way.

Down went both men into the abyss.

Down, down they went swiftly.

Had it been air they were falling through at that height it would have been certain death.

For they fell nigh a thousand feet. This was the depth of the crater's main shaft. They were in the heart of the mountain.

When they struck terra firma once more, they saw by the light of their lamps that they were in a mighty high arched cavern chamber.

This no doubt had once been a tremendous reservoir for the storage of the vast quantities of lava which seethed and boiled in its underground home.

The fall had not injured them, for a fall through water is never injurious.

They were unharmed. But their position was something terrible to contemplate.

Mayhew put his helmet close to Frank's.

"Frank, we are in for it."

"So it seems."

"We will never get out of here."

"We must try."

"What is the use. We are in the center of the mountain."

"Well, allow that. We can get out if we try."

"Do you believe that?"

"I do."

"But how?"

"See!"

Frank held up the spool of electric wire which connected with the Tortoise. This he had retained, and it had unwound itself all the way down.

Frank instantly drew a sounder from his belt. He put it onto the wire and sent a message to the Tortoise.

"Barney, we are at the bottom of the crater. The lava crust gave way and let us down. You must get us out. Get a long line. Come down to the crater and let it down to us."

Barney caught the message and it acted upon him like an electric shock.



"Mither presarve us!" he cried. "Shure, Mистер Frank and the professor air in trouble. Do yez sthaye here, naygur, an' I'll be afther goin' down to their help!"

Pomp did not demur.

"Golly, I'ish!" he cried, excitedly, "yo' mus' get dem out ob dat fo' suab. But jes' yo' look out yo' don' get in yo'sef."

"Begorra, yez needn't worry about that!"

Barney hastily donned his diving suit.

Then he procured a huge coil of rope and set out for the crater. The search-light made all as plain as day.

He had no trouble in finding his way to the mouth of the crater.

Barney got down upon his stomach and crept to the edge of the crust. There was great peril in this, for the crust might yield at any moment.

But he kept his position, and drew himself out over the edge until he could look down into the abyss.

Far, far below, he saw a faint star of light.

It was the helmet lights of the two divers. Barney knew this.

The Celt saw that they were at a great depth. He at once began to revolve in his mind a plan for their rescue.

Slowly he began to lower the end of his rope.

Down it slid, until after a time he felt a slight twitch upon it, and knew that it was in the grasp of the divers.

Then the Celt crept cautiously back from the verge.

He knew the precarious nature of it, and that it could not be expected to bear a great weight.

His plan was the best possible, and this was to carry the other end of the rope beyond the verge of the crater, and secure it firmly to a crag of rock.

"Begorra, now they must cloimb up av thimselves!" he declared. "Shure it'll be a long one, but it's the only way."

Meanwhile, at the bottom of the pit Frank and the professor had welcomed the rope joyfully.

Already they saw rescue at hand.

"But he never can pull us up out of here and escape breaking in himself," said the professor.

"I don't believe he will try it."

"What then?"

"We must climb up ourselves."

Frank had guessed Barney's purpose.

And sure enough, a short while later came the signal. Barney made several short pulls upon the rope.

Fortunately the professor, in youth, had been a sailor.

It was not therefore difficult for him to pull himself up on the rope. As for Frank, he was a born athlete, and could have made twice the distance.

It was not long therefore before the professor was upon the crust above safe and sound.

He at once made a signal to Frank, who began the ascent. Up went the young inventor until he finally stood upon the crater's crust again.

The professor had joined Barney, and Frank hastened to do likewise.

They put their helmets together.

"We owe our lives to you, Barney," said Frank.

"Shure, sor, I'm glad yez are out av it!" cried the delighted Celt. "Shure I was afeard it was the end av ye."

"I don't think we will tackle the crater again!" declared the professor.

"No," agreed Frank.

"It will be enough to explore the sides of the mountain."

"You are right. Everything is all right aboard the Tortoise, Barney?"

"Yis, sor."

"Very well. Suppose you return and we will continue our explorations. We will try and keep out of pitfalls now."

"All right, sor."

"It was lucky that you took that wire along," said the professor. "I think we had better keep it with us."

This was trae. The two divers doubtless would never have got out of the crater if it had not been for the telegraphic signal to Barney.

Frank took pains, therefore, to take the wire along with him this time also. Barney went back to the Tortoise.

Then the two explorers started down the mountain side.

They speedily found this a more arduous task than they had imagined. New and deadly perils confronted them, and it was destined to be some while before they should see the Tortoise again.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE FATE OF FRANK READE, JR.

Down into the darkness of the awful ocean depths, Frank and the professor bravely climbed.

They were soon beyond the rays of the search-light.

It was no light work climbing over the rough stones and bowlders. At times they came to precipitous descents where the greatest of care had to be exercised.

Prof. Mayhew's dearest purpose was to descend as far as possible into the ocean depths.

He was anxious to learn the exact altitude so to speak of the submarine mountain. Also its extent and peculiarities of formation.

Other parts of the ocean bed were quite well known to geographers. This particular part of the ocean was unexplored.

Therefore the zeal of Prof. Mayhew can well be understood.

For some while the explorers kept on, the professor making careful note of everything in his mind.

Along the base of a high cliff they were working their way when the first incident of a series occurred.

Frank was slightly in advance when he saw a peculiar sight ahead. Hanging over the verge of the cliff was a strange formation which looked for all the world like snow.

It was a perfect crystal formation as seen at a distance. Revealed in the helmet lights Frank thought he had never seen anything like it or to equal it.

He put his helmet close to Mayhew's and shouted:

"What is it?"

"I cannot imagine," replied the scientist. "I have never seen the likes before."

"Nor I."

"It looks like snow."

"Yes, but that could not be in these warm waters."

"Certainly not."

"Let us investigate."

Frank stepped boldly forward and putting his hand up touched the formation. In that moment he saw what it was.

It was a jelly like substance with a frothy matter over it. A peculiar species of submarine fungi no doubt.

But even as the young inventor examined it he saw the enormity of its growth and its unstable position upon the cliff.

The thought came to him that if it should fall he would be buried in it. At once he instinctively made a move to step back.

But too late.

Like a mighty avalanche the mass began to slide. Like a flash Frank was involved in it, and went out of sight.

Mayhew leaped back just in time. He was not a moment too soon. The huge mass went by him like a thunderbolt.

Down the mountain side it went and out of sight in the dark depths in a flash.

In its folds it carried Frank Reade, Jr. To what depths or to what awful death could only be guessed.

Aghast the professor stood for a moment inactive.

"Oh, my God!" he cried. "Frank is gone! What shall I do? What shall I do?"

At first he thought of rushing back to the Tortoise for help.

But he reflected in that moment that it would be folly. Acting upon second impulse he started down the slope after Frank.

From that moment began the terrible disasters which crowded thick and fast upon the explorers.

As the professor stumbled on down the slope he encountered huge masses of the jelly-like substance.

Every moment he expected to come upon Frank's mangled body.

But as he went on, he did not find it. Then came the crowning sense of horror and despair.

He came suddenly to the verge of a mighty abyss. What its depths the professor did not know.

That Frank had been carried down into this, he had no doubt. He stood half fainting upon the spot.

Oh, if he could only shout. But this was impossible. What should he do? What could he do?

In his extremity and agony of spirit the professor leaned over the verge of the precipice and tried to flash his helmet light down into the depths.

Then he drew a line from his belt and lowered it over the verge.

Down it went, but it failed to touch bottom. The depth of the abyss was something fearful to contemplate.

What was to be done?

The professor was frantic.

"Oh, my God!" he wailed again. "What shall I do?"

But in a few moments he became calmer. In a reasoning mood he decided to return to the Tortoise.

At least the submarine boat could descend into the abyss which he was unable to do.

With this reflection the professor at once started for the summit. It was a long hard climb.

How he got there he never knew. But he remember climbing aboard the boat and crawling into the vestibule and shutting the door after him.

Then he fainted.

Barney and Pomp had seen him coming. They waited for him to enter the cabin.

But when he failed to appear Barney cried:

"Shure, an' phwat is the matther? I don't see Mистер Frank at all, at all!"

"Golly!" gasped Pomp. "Yo' don' s'pose anyting hab happened to him?"

"Begorra, I'll see!"

Barney sprang to the door of the vestibule and looked in through a small glass window.

He saw the professor lying on the floor of the vestibule.

"Shure an' it's kilt he is!" he yelled. "Turn on the pump valve, naygur!"

Pomp instantly turned the valve.

The water rushed out of the vestibule.

Barney threw open the door, and rushing in picked the professor up bodily.

He brought him quickly into the cabin and removed the helmet.

As he did so Mayhew revived.



His pallid face and horrified manner gave the cue to Barney and Pomp.

"Shure, phwere's Misther Frank?" cried the Celt. "Speak up loike a man."

"My God, I fear he is dead!" feebly gasped the professor.

"Dead! No—no!" cried Barney, excitedly. "Don't yez dare tell me that; I know better."

"Golly fo' glory! Marse Frank ain' dead. He cain't be dead!" wailed Pomp. "We must save him!"

With this the professor recovered sufficiently to tell his story. Barney and Pomp made quick action.

They instantly sprung into the pilot-house.

The Tortoise was almost instantly on its way down the mountain side. The professor pointed out the way.

Down to the very verge of the abyss went the submarine boat.

But at this juncture there came a terrible catastrophe. The first warning was a sudden, violent rocking of the boat.

Then Barney chanced to glance up just as the boat began to settle into the abyss.

He was convulsed with horror at the sight which met his gaze. Down over the precipice came a huge boulder.

In some way it had become dislodged from the summit.

The submarine boat was directly in its line. There was no time to dodge or evade it.

The boulder struck the verge of the cliff, bounded out and struck the Tortoise full in the after hull.

Every man on board believed at that moment that they were going to the bottom.

It seemed impossible for the Tortoise to escape being crashed.

And crushed she was; but very fortunately it was in a part adjoining the reservoir. The hull split and the water rushed in.

Fortunately the wall of the cabin remained intact. The lives of the explorers were spared.

But the shock sprung the reservoir valve out of place so that it could not be set back.

Instantly the compressed air expelled the water, and the Tortoise began to rise to the surface. Those on board were powerless to prevent this.

Up, up she went, more slowly than ordinarily on account of the water in her hold.

Barney and Pomp rushed to the reservoir valve to check her upward speed. But it was too late. They could not turn it.

"Begorra, phwat shall we do?" cried Barney, wildly. "Shure an' there's Misther Frank at the bottom of the say!"

Indeed, it was an awful moment. But the worst was to come.

Straight to the surface went the Tortoise. But, unknown to the explorers, a fearful tempest was in progress there.

And as the Tortoise sprung up out of the sea, it was to be picked up by the mighty waves and hurled upon her beam ends.

Everything in the cabin went helter skelter. The inmates were hurled from their feet, and tossed like puppets.

It was utterly impossible to get to the wheel, and attempt to steady the boat.

Driven on before the gale, her engines flying at full speed, the Tortoise ran like lightning until there was a sudden awful rending crash, and water rushed into the cabin.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ON THE ATOLL.

WORDS cannot express the horror of those on board the ill-fated Tortoise or adequately depict the situation.

That she was a wreck was certain. It was every man for himself.

All were in the water. Barney was a strong swimmer and struck out blindly.

How he managed to keep up he never knew, but being hurled suddenly aloft upon a mighty wave, he suddenly felt terra firma under him.

What did it mean?

Was he at the bottom of the sea?

But no! he was able to breathe—there was air about him. He was alive and was upon land.

Astonished beyond measure, the Celt crept farther out of the water. Then he looked up and saw high cliffs and waving palms.

"Begorra, I'm on an island!" he gasped. "Shure, phwat the devil does it mean?"

Then he remembered that since entering the Pacific valley they had not once made the surface.

This island was no doubt the highest peak of the submarine mountain, which here jutted out of the water in the shape of a fertile island.

All this at once flashed over the Celt. It stunned him, however, as he reflected upon the fate of his companions.

"Bejabers, am I the only survivor?" he gasped. "Oh, that's awful!"

He saw the hull of the wrecked Tortoise far out in the surf. What of Pomp and the professor?

Were they drowned?

Horrified, Barney crept higher upon the beach and strained his gaze at the wreck. And suddenly a great cry of joy escaped his lips.

"Mither be praised!" he yelled. "It's the professor!"

Sure enough, out of the surf walked Prof. Mayhew. It required all his strength to crawl beyond the reach of the thundering waves. Barney rushed down to help him.

"Och, sor, it's glad I am that yez are here!" cried the Celt, wildly. "Snure, it's an awful thing as happened us!"

"Merciful Heaven!" gasped the professor, hollowly. "Only think of poor Frank!"

A wail of agony escaped Barney.

"We cannot go to his rescue!"

"Och, murther! the dear koind mather is gone! Oh, worra! worra! it's awful!" howled Barney, in agony of spirit.

They were both so overcome that it required some time for them to recover. Then the professor asked:

"But have you seen Pomp?"

"Och, an' the naygur, too!" wailed Barney. "Shure, he's gone, too. The devil is ather us all, bad cess to him."

But at that moment both heard a shout. They turned their heads and there far up on the beach they saw Pomp.

The darky was an excellent swimmer. Aided by Providence he had also got ashore.

The joy of the survivors was most intense. But the thought of the awful fate of Frank Reade, Jr., palled upon them all.

Barney began to study up a way to rescue him yet.

"Be jabers, if the say goes down and I kin get out to the wreck," he cried, "shure, I'll get a diving-suit an' I'll niver come out av the wather till I foind him dead or aloive!"

"I'se jes' wid yo' dar, honey!" cried Pomp.

"Don't be foolish, lads!" cried the professor. "That can never be done. Before you could get to him he will be dead."

But Barney and Pomp would not listen to this. They were full of their idea.

But the storm increased in force rather than diminished. It was utterly impossible to get out to the wreck in such weather.

All that the castaways could do was to crawl up on the beach in the shelter of the cliffs and wait.

Night was close upon them and soon utter darkness shut down.

Still the storm roared and bellowed terribly. Not until long after midnight did it abate.

Then the moon came out in a cloudless sky. The sea rolled long and heavily.

Barney paced the shore looking for the wreck of the Tortoise. But it had entirely disappeared. There was nothing left of it.

Not even the frame of the hull was left. The shore was strewn with wreckage.

But the heavy articles of the boat being of steel had gone to the bottom.

The castaways explored the wreckage thoroughly, but not a sign of a diving suit could be found.

Barney and Pomp now gave up all hope. They counted Frank Reade, Jr., as dead.

Slowly and sorrowfully they climbed to the top of the cliff and took a look at the interior of the island.

It was seen to be an atoll, which was further proof that it was the real summit of the submarine mountain.

But, about upon all hands was the boundless ocean.

There was no other land in sight, nor not a sail upon the broad expanse.

The isle was evidently out of the line of regular steamers, and perhaps seldom visited.

In that case it might be years before they could hope to be taken off the isle. It might be forever.

With such a dampening conviction there was little wonder that the castaways were downcast.

But a very important matter for consideration was a supply of food.

A few cases of provisions had washed ashore from the wreck but they were of the sort which the sea water would spoil and were not palatable now.

However, it speedily became apparent that they could not starve upon the isle.

There were plenty of game birds and animals and the sands of the shore were full of shell-fish.

Some clams were dug and they regaled themselves upon this sort of fare.

A fire was built in a crevice of the cliff and Prof. Mayhew cried:

"Well, boys, if we must stay upon this isle, let us make the best of it."

"Hooray!" cried Barney. "Shure that's phwat I say myself. Be-dad, we'll not stharve I'm ather thinkin'!"

"Golly, I jes' fink we bettah save some ob de fings from de wreck," declared Pomp.

"Right," agreed Mayhew. "We'll do it."

With which all went to work reclaiming everything from the wreck that was valuable.

Of course they did not know how long they might have to stay upon the isle.

It was best to proceed if they really intended to stay there for a long time.

So every effort was made to establish themselves comfortably in their island home.

Half the day passed thus, when suddenly, as Barney was crossing the beach, he was electrified by a distant sound.

"Mither av mercy!" he gasped; "phwat was that?"

It was unmistakably the distant hello of a human voice.

Meanwhile, what of the fate of Frank Reade, Jr.? Carried down by the awful avalanche of jelly, it would seem as if he had gone to his death.

But fate had not so decreed it.



"To be sure, he was carried down the mighty steep and even over into the abyss.

Enveloped as he was in the mass of fungi, he knew not where he was being carried, nor could he see a thing.

When he came to a stop he was beneath a vast amount of the fungi. He lay quite still for a time.

He could breathe freely and was not even bruised. He collected his thoughts and then made action.

It was an easy manner to part the jelly-like mass and find his way out of it.

When he had got clear of it he looked about him.

By the light of his helmet lamp he saw that he was at the base of a mighty high cliff.

To ascend this would be impossible. Yet he knew he must have fallen over that cliff.

"What will the professor think?" he mused. "I ought to signal him in some way that I'm all right."

But he could see nothing above. He waited for a glimpse of the professor's light.

But it came not. He was now satisfied that he must make an attempt to get at the top of the cliff without aid.

This he found to be impossible.

However, he was at the bottom of a defile, and he might follow this until he found a way to climb up.

So he kept on in this manner; but the cliff still offered no means of ascent.

However, the opposite side of the defile was easily ascended. Frank conceived the idea of ascending this and signaling across.

But as he kept on climbing upward, he became aware every moment that he was climbing a mountain.

What did it mean?

Had he become turned around or confused, and was he really ascending the submarine mountain?

The more he reflected upon this, the better satisfied he became that it was the truth.

So he kept on manfully. But it seemed an eternal climb.

Time and again he was obliged to pause and rest. Still he kept on.

Hours passed. All this while, though Frank did not realize it, he had been encircling the main cave or peak of the submarine mountain, and was gradually approaching the atoll above.

For hours he kept on, and suddenly became aware of a startling fact.

Above him there was a fearful roar like thunder. It was deafening, and he felt the water in motion about him.

"Mercy!" he muttered, "that is queer! I am very near the surface and that is the thunder of a storm. Where am I?"

He realized unmistakably that he was lost.

To find his way back to the Tortoise now he knew was impossible. His pulse throbbed hotly and his head swam.

He sank down upon a rock.

"Mercy on me!" he cried, "what am I to do? They will never find me!"

The situation was one calculated to strike terror to the stoutest heart. Frank however recovered himself.

"There is only one thing to do!" he muttered, "and that is to make the best of it."

This was certainly a plucky resolution. Frank proceeded to carry it out.

He decided to go up as near the surface as possible. He already suspected that the top of the mountain was an island.

Up and still up he went.

As he did so, the light of day grew plainer, and he suddenly lifted his gaze and distinctly saw the sky through the lashing waters above.

He was far enough below the surface not to feel wholly the effect of the storm. The bed of the ocean here was very sandy and ascended gradually.

Frank became certain that there was an island above.

He could plainly hear the thunder of the waves upon the sandy beach.

But how was he to get out of heaving waters and gain the shore? He could not have kept his feet a moment in their embrace.

But this difficulty was suddenly obviated.

As he wandered on, he suddenly discovered the bed of the channel which led into the calmer waters of the atoll.

Following this rapidity over vast beds of coral and sand, he came into the still waters of the little inclosed bay, or atoll.

It was but a moment's work to emerge from this.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE END.

AN atoll is properly a coral isle in the shape of a ring, with a channel connecting its inner waters with the outer sea.

Frank gained the inner beach of the atoll. He was completely exhausted, and sank down.

In the western sky the sun was struggling to get through the storm clouds. But they closed angrily over it, and the storm raged fiercer than ever.

Frank little dreamed at that moment that upon the opposite side of the isle his friends were cast away.

If he had, it is safe to say that he would quickly have joined them.

Instead, he believed them at the bottom of the sea, and was wondering how he ever could rejoin them.

But darkness was at hand, and he knew he could do nothing more that day.

He removed his helmet, and then made himself comfortable until dawn.

The storm ceased at midnight. When the morning came, the sun shone bright and clear.

Frank arose and walked along the beach. He wandered around for some time trying to find a way across the isle.

But it was a long time before he could manage to get through the network of vines and foliage.

Finally he went back to the channel beach and after a walk of some miles came to the outer shore.

Here he arrived about noon. He was resolved to make a circuit of the isle.

So he kept along the beach at a sharp walk. Suddenly as he was clambering over some rocks he beheld an astounding sight.

Dead ahead, he saw three men trying to pull something out of the surf.

At once he shouted.

And it was this loud hello which had attracted Barney's attention.

The effect was thrilling.

The Celt gave a yell fit to wake the dead.

"Whurroo!" he screamed. "Shure it's Misther Frank, alive an' well."

The professor was so dumfounded that he could not act.

But Barney and Pomp were rushing toward Frank and soon were fondly and wildly embracing him.

"Glory fo' goodness!" screamed Pomp. "I'se done glad dat we'se all togeder once mo'."

Indeed this was the general sentiment. Experiences were exchanged and then the question arose as to what it was best to do.

Frank was in a quandary.

Naturally he felt bad at the loss of the Tortoise, but said, pluckily: "Never mind! It couldn't be helped. I'll build a better one next time."

Even as they were discussing the problem Barney leaped to his feet, shouting wildly:

"A ship! A ship!"

This was true. Around a headland of the atoll there swung into view a full rigged clipper ship.

The shouts of the castaways were heard and a boat put out.

They were taken aboard the Golden Gate bound for Hawaii. Three weeks later they were safely landed in Honolulu.

A steamer thence was taken for San Francisco. The voyagers were warmly welcomed home.

Frank Reade, Jr., Barney and Pomp went at once to Readestown. Prof. Mayhew went home to New York.

He had lost his valuable papers and specimens in the wreck of the Tortoise but his word was taken by his fellow scientists, and he became the lion of the society.

And thus ended the exploration of the submarine mountain. It had resulted rather disastrously, but Frank Reade, Jr., was not discouraged for he at once went to work upon a new invention, the account of which we will relate in a future story.

[THE END.]

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